organisations in executing the development projects thus enabling them to act as watchdog of Government institutions; and

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI SATYABRATA MOOKHERJEE): (a) and (b) The Planning Commission functions as the nodal agency for the Voluntary Organisations/Non Governmental Organisations. The Voluntary Sector has been recognized as partners actively involved in economic and social development with strength of advocacy and organizational skills. The details are provided in theTenth Plan Document, Volume 1, Chapter 6. The Document is also available on the website of Planning Commission at www.planningcommission. nic.in

BPL population in Madhya Pradesh

1068. SHRI P. K. MAHESHWARI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that population living Below Poverty Line is increasing very fast in Madhya Pradesh;

(b) what steps are being taken by Government to reduce the BPL population, district-wise; and

(c) if no steps have been taken so far, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI SATYABRATA MOOKHERJEE): (a) No, Sir. The percentage of people living below the poverty line in Madhya Pradesh, estimated from the NSS data on household consumer expenditure, has come down from 42.52% in 1993-94 to 37.43% in 1999-2000.

(b) and (c) There is a three-pronged action to alleviate and reduce the proverty in the country. These are: (i) acceleration of economic growth, (ii) human and social development through literacy, education, health, nutrition, meeting of the minimum needs, elevation of social and economic status of the weaker sections of the society, etc., and (iii) direct attack on poverty through employment and income generating programmes and assets-building for the poor.